Much as the accident is a matter of regret and deep sorrow for us all, I would like to take this opportunity of assuring the House that there has never been, nor will there ever be, any compromise with air safety in domestic or international air transport operations. Every aircraft operating in the country is subjected to the most stringent airworthiness checks and our system of regulation and control is as comprehensive as can be.

Even so, and after considering all aspects of the matter, Government have appointed Air Marshal (Retd.) S.S. Ramdas, former Chairman and Managing Director of Indian Airlines, as the Court of Inquiry under Rule 75 of Aircraft Rules, 1937 to carry out the formal investigations into the accident. The Court of Inquiry has been specifically requested to give immediate findings on whether operations to Bhuntar airport have any technical shortcomings and if so, to suggest remedial measures thereof, particularly in adverse weather conditions.

I would also like to inform the Hon'ble Members that I have directed a 100% safety audit of every aircraft operating in the private sector.

This is being done in addition to the mandatory checks which are already in operation to ensure flight safety in domestic operations.

As the Hon'ble Members are aware there has been tremendous growth in the air transport industry after its demonopolisation. Even under this rapid expansion process, the air safety aspect has not been allowed to be compromised. Procedures involing air safety are reviewed from time to time in consultation with the operators and necessary preventive steps are taken. I wish to convey to this House that the Ministry of Civil Aviation and its organisations are making every possible effort to ensure safe air transportation in the country and there is no cause for concern in the matter.

I will conclude by conveying our heartfelt condolences and deep sympathies for the Members of the bereaved families.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): We will take up the clarifications tomorrow. Before we adjourn for the day, if you permit, the Finance Minister would like to make *Suo motu* statement. He has been waiting in the House....*(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: We have a right to seek clarifications.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Yes That can be had tomorrow.

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Tomorrow, we have the short-duration discussion. *(Interruptions)*.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): It will take only half a minute. *(Interruptions)*.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Mr. Ahluwalia, the statement has been made in the Lok Sabha. He has to make it in the Rajya Sabha also. *(Interruptions)*.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Interim Relief to Central Government Employees

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): Madam Vice-Chairman, I am pleased to inform the House that based on our discussions with the Pay Commission and representatives of the staff side, we have requested the Pay Commission to consider whether another instalment of interim relief may be granted to the Central Government employees and, if so, to make suitable recommendations in this regard. Any amount of interim relief recommended by the Pay Commission and accepted by the Government will be fully adjusted against and subsumed in

the final recommendations of the Pay Commission. The aforesaid formula is acceptable to all parties concerned.

The Pay Commission has also informed us that the final report will be available towards the end of September 1996.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Thank you very much, Mr. Minister.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA (Karnataka): What does this mean? Does this mean releasing the instalment?

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: They will recommend.

SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA: Then what does the statement mean?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE): Now, I adjourn the House till tomorrow 11 AM.

The House then adjorned at twenty-one minutes past six of the clock till leven of the clock on Wednesday, the 17th July, 1996.